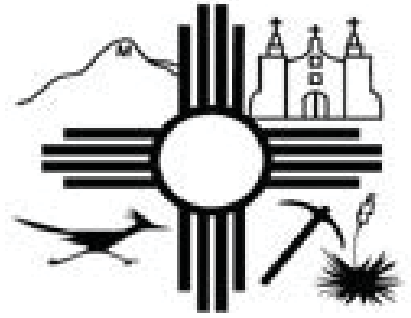


City of Socorro

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It's All About the Money

Hard times have hit us all: the Nation, the State, the City. The New Mexico Legislature has completed its business for 2010, raising taxes and redistributing monies to close a budget shortfall. Through a bill declaring an emergency, stimulus funding for planned projects—the softball field, soccer fields, several road projects—was retained by the state instead of being released to counties and municipalities. The Governor will reclaim more of the stimulus funding to close the hole left when he vetoed the Food Tax.

This veto may have an even greater impact on the City. When the tax on food was repealed in 2005, the State continued to make payments to the City to compensate for the annual loss of revenue caused by the repeal. It is unclear whether these payments will continue. If not, the City will have to find a way to make up the difference in its budget.

Of the 6.875% paid by consumers as Gross Receipts Tax in the city of Socorro (that's 6.875 cents for every dollar an item costs), 5% goes to the State, 1.4375 comes to the City and .4375% goes to the County. The Legislature increased the tax by .125%, scheduled to begin July 1, 2010. This additional money will go into the State General Fund.

City Officials Target Budget

With the elections over and a new face in the City Council Chambers, the one word on the tip of most every elected official's tongue is "budget." They all agree that the current infrastructure projects take top billing and must be completed: the landfill, the sewers, the arsenic removal and the street projects.



Donald Monette, who ran unopposed, agrees. "We're in a challenging budget cycle for sure this year," he said, and as Chairman of the City Budget Committee, he'll be dealing with the challenge more than anyone.

For anything extra, "We need to make sure we stick to the basics: water, gas, with each department carrying itself. It's going to be tough getting money for projects—we must start thinking outside the box to find money for projects," said Councilor Gordy Hicks.



"We're going to have to do more with less and that may mean eliminating duplication of services, a lot more collaborating and working together with different agencies, like we do in the Mayor's drug task force," says Ernest Pargas, Jr.

Mayor Ravi Bhasker, elected to his sixth term as mayor, acknowledges, "We do have money. We've been luckier getting it through the USDA Rural Utility Service," he says, referring to the grants that will be used



for arsenic removal. He notes that the State is supposed to send more money back to us in projects but they're using it to pay for State Government instead. The City will be scrambling to make up the shortfall by using cash reserves for such projects as correcting the flooding on Faulkner Street.



The one elected official who didn't respond with the word "budget" was Nick Fleming, the newest member of the City Council. After 30 years of teaching in the public schools, Fleming knows the importance of getting acquainted with the issues before making recommendations. "The first thing I'll do (as a new city council member)

is follow the 3 L's I always used during my years of teaching : look, listen and learn. There is so much going on that I'll have to decipher all the information that is coming my way."

Earth Day Celebrations Planned

Need to recycle? Need to clean up? Need to have some fun? Join your friends and neighbors during Socorro's annual Earth Day celebrations April 17 through 30 and get things done while having a good time!



That first Saturday, April 17, you can recycle mixed paper and cardboard by bringing it to the Plaza between 8:30 and 11:00 am (and not just April 17--this happens EVERY third Saturday!).



On Thursday, April 22, we'll celebrate our pledges to Keep Socorro Beautiful. Come to the Plaza for music, education, giveaways and the second annual Trash Fashion show. If you want to be in the show, call 835-8927 for more information.



Start Saturday, April 24, with breakfast at the Socorro Heritage and Visitor Center, then help with the Community-wide clean up. Go home and spend the rest of the weekend cleaning up your own home/garage/yard.



April 26-30, the City will pick up large items and haul them to the landfill for you for free. Just call City Hall at 835-0240 to schedule, limited to one pick-up load per location. And, please! have the items ready to go at the curb.

Let's S.W.A.P.!

Ladies! Craving something new to wear? Got a closet full of things you don't wear? Then make plans now to attend the FIRST Socorro Women's Apparel Party (S.W.A.P.)--the ultimate way to recycle!

Here's how it works: Clean out that closet. Find those garments you're ready to part with (especially the ones you never wore anyway!), including shoes and accessories. Drop them off at the Socorro Heritage and Visitor Center in exchange for SWAP bucks. Bring your bucks to the old Church of the Epiphany (next door to the Heritage and Visitor Center) Thursday evening, April 29, from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm for an entertaining evening of fashion exchange and socializing!

Please follow these guidelines:

- No undergarments or swimsuits
- All clothing must be clean and only lightly worn (think about what you'd like to wear!)
- Bring your friends--especially those who wear the same size you wear....
- Any clothing remaining after the evening will be donated to local charity.

Employee Anniversaries

Andy Gonzales	25 years
Benjie Maldonado	5 years

City Council

Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez	Nick Fleming
Gordy Hicks	Toby Jaramillo
Donald Monette	Michael Olguin, Jr.
Ernest Pargas, Jr.	Peter D. Romero
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor	
Pat Salome, City Clerk	